

Application No. 09/927,891
After Final Office Action of November 17, 2005

Docket No.: 59184/P002US/10026564

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) An earpiece auditory device comprising:

a behind-the-ear component, the behind-the-ear component being shaped to fit behind an ear of a user, wherein said behind-the-ear component comprises a module including processing circuitry;

a completely-in-canal component, the completely-in-canal component being shaped to fit into the ear canal of the user ~~in such a manner as to touch the bony portion of the ear canal of the user~~; and

a connector physically coupling said behind-the-ear component to said completely-in-canal component, said connector having at least one end detachably physically coupled to said behind-the-ear component or said completely-in-canal component, wherein said connector is designed to include a portion of said connector within the ear canal of the user, and said connector being sufficiently rigid so as to allow said connector to be used to insert and remove the completely-in-canal component from the ear canal of the user.

2. (Original) The device of claim 1 wherein said completely-in-canal component further comprises a speaker.

3. (Original) The device of claim 2 wherein said physically coupling includes communicatively coupling said behind-the-ear component to said completely-in-canal component, and wherein at least one of the at least one detachable physical coupling includes a detachable communicative coupling.

4. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 1 further comprising an ear mold coupled to the completely-in-canal component, wherein the ear mold seals the ear canal when said completely-in-canal component is inserted into the ear canal of the user 3-wherein at least one of the at least one detachable physical coupling is to said behind the ear component.

5. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 1 further comprising an ear mold coupled to the completely-in-canal component, wherein the ear mold is vented such that the ear canal is not sealed when said completely-in-canal component is inserted into the ear canal of the user 4-wherein at least one of the at least one detachable physical coupling is to said completely-in-canal component.

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6. (Original) The device of claim 3 wherein said connector comprises:
at least one wire cable; and
at least one fastener physically, as well as communicatively, coupled to said behind-the-ear component or said completely-in-canal component; wherein at least one of said at least one fastener provides at least one of the at least one detachable physical coupling.

7. (Original) The device of claim 6 wherein at least one of said at least one fastener is operable to prohibit an undesirable external element from interfering with a detachable communicative coupling between said connector and said behind-the-ear component.

8. (Original) The device of claim 6 wherein at least one of said at least one fastener is operable to prohibit an undesirable external element from interfering with a detachable communicative coupling between said connector and said completely-in-canal component.

9. (Original) The device of claim 6 wherein the at least one detachable communicative coupling includes a hole and prong arrangement.

10. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 6 wherein said speaker is detachably physically coupled to an ear mold.

11. (Original) The device of claim 10 wherein said completely-in-canal component further includes a speaker receiving member, and wherein said connector includes a speaker fastener detachably physically coupled to said speaker receiving member.

12. (Original) The device of claim 11 wherein said speaker is detachably physically coupled to said speaker fastener.

13. (Original) The device of claim 12 wherein the detachable physical coupling between said speaker and speaker fastener includes a detachable communicative coupling.

14. (Original) The device of claim 6 wherein said at least one fastener includes a fastener detachably physically coupled to said module of said behind-the-ear component.

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15. (Original) The device of claim 14 wherein the detachable physical coupling between said fastener and said module includes a detachable communicative coupling.

16. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 10 wherein said ear mold is a universal fit ear mold.

17. (Original) The device of claim 1 wherein said completely-in-canal component is an open mold configuration.

18. (Original) The device of claim 1 wherein said processing circuitry includes sound processing circuitry.

19. (Original) The device of claim 18 wherein said sound processing circuitry includes sound amplification circuitry.

20. (Original) The device of claim 18 wherein said sound processing circuitry includes sound reduction circuitry.

21. (Original) The device of claim 1 wherein said behind-the-ear component further includes a microphone.

22-29. (Cancelled)

30. (Original) The device of claim 1 wherein at least one of the at least one detachable physical coupling includes at least one projection of said connector engaging at least one groove of said behind-the-ear component or said completely-in-canal component.

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31. (Currently Amended) An earpiece auditory device comprising:
a behind-the-ear component, the behind-the-ear component being shaped to fit behind
an ear of a user, said behind the ear component comprising a module including processing
circuitry;

a completely-in-canal component, the completely-in-canal component being shaped to
fit into the ear canal of the user ~~in such a manner as to touch the bony portion of the user's~~
~~ear-canal~~, said completely-in-canal component ~~further~~ comprising an ear mold;

means for physically coupling said completely-in-canal component to said behind-
the-ear component, wherein said means for physically coupling includes means for
detachably physically coupling said completely-in-canal component to said behind-the-ear
component, and wherein said means for physically coupling is shaped to place a portion of
said means for physically coupling within the ear canal of the user, said means for physically
coupling being sufficiently rigid so as to allow said means for physically coupling to be used
to insert and remove the completely-in-canal component from the ear canal of the user.

32. (Original) The device of claim 31 wherein said completely-in-canal
component further includes a speaker.

33. (Original) The device of claim 32 wherein said means for physically coupling
includes means for communicatively coupling said behind-the-ear component to said
completely-in-canal component, and wherein said means for detachably physically coupling
includes means for detachably communicatively coupling said completely-in-canal
component to said behind-the-ear component.

34. (Original) The device of claim 33 wherein said means for detachably
physically coupling includes means for detachably physically coupling at said behind-the-ear
component.

35. (Original) The device of claim 34 wherein said means for detachably
physically coupling also includes means for detachably physically coupling at said
completely-in-canal component.

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36. (Original) The device of claim 33 wherein said completely-in-canal component further includes a speaker receiving member and wherein said means for physically coupling includes a speaker fastening means.

37. (Original) The device of claim 36 wherein said means for detachably physically coupling includes means for detachably physically coupling said speaker to said speaker fastening means.

38. (Original) The device of claim 36 wherein said means for detachably physically coupling includes means for detachably physically coupling said speaker fastening means to said speaker receiving member.

39. (Original) The device of claim 31 wherein said processing circuitry includes sound processing circuitry.

40. (Original) The device of claim 39 wherein said sound processing circuitry includes sound reduction circuitry.

41-44. (Cancelled)

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45. (Currently Amended) A method for providing a plurality of earpiece auditory device components, a portion of which may be assembled to form an earpiece auditory device tailored to a user, said method comprising:

providing a plurality of behind-the-ear components from which a behind-the-ear component operable to facilitate the user's intended use for the earpiece auditory device may be selected, wherein each of said behind-the-ear components comprises a module including processing circuitry; and

providing a plurality of connectors from which a connector of sufficient length may be selected to physically couple a selected behind-the-ear component, when said selected behind-the-ear component is placed behind the ear of the user, to a completely-in-canal component when said completely-in-canal component is placed inside the ear canal of the user ~~so deep as to touch the bony portion of the ear canal~~ ~~may be selected~~, wherein said connector of sufficient length is shaped to place a portion of said connector within the ear canal of the user when said completely-in-canal component is placed in the ear canal of the user, and wherein said connector of sufficient length includes at least one end operable to detachably physically couple to said selected behind-the-ear component or said completely-in-canal component, and said connector of sufficient length is sufficiently rigid so as to allow said connector of sufficient length to be used to insert and remove the completely-in-canal component from the ear canal of the user ~~wherein said completely-in-canal component comprises an ear mold and speaker~~.

46. (Original) The method of claim 45 wherein said connector of sufficient length is operable to communicatively couple said selected behind-the-ear component to said completely-in-canal component, and wherein at least one of the at least one end of said connector of sufficient length operable to detachably physically couple to said selected behind-the-ear component or said completely-in-canal component is also operable to detachably communicatively couple to said selected behind-the-ear component or said completely-in-canal component.

47. (Original) The method of claim 46 wherein said plurality of said behind-the-ear components includes a behind-the-ear component fitting behind the ear of the particular user in such a manner as to be made invisible by the user's ear.

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48. (Original) The method of claim 46 wherein said plurality of said behind-the-ear components includes at least two behind-the-ear components of different dimensions.

49. (Original) The method of claim 46 wherein said plurality of said behind-the-ear components includes at least one behind-the-ear component having sound processing circuitry.

50. (Original) The method of claim 49 wherein said at least one behind-the-ear component having sound processing circuitry includes at least one behind-the-ear component including sound reduction circuitry.

51. (Original) The method of claim 49 wherein said at least one behind-the-ear component having sound processing circuitry includes at least two behind-the-ear components having different sound processing circuitry.

52. (Original) The method of claim 46 wherein said plurality of behind-the-ear components includes at least one behind-the-ear component having a microphone.

53. (Cancelled)

54. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 46 wherein said method further comprises:

providing a plurality of ear molds which connect to said completely-in-canal components from which said ear mold completely-in-canal-component may be selected.

55. (Original) The method of claim 46 wherein said method further comprises:

providing a plurality of at least one element to be included in said completely-in-canal component, from which at least one of the elements to be included in said completely-in-canal component may be selected.

56. (Original) The method of claim 55 wherein said plurality of at least one element includes at least two ear molds of differing dimensions at least one of which fits the user's ear structure.

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57. (Original) The method of claim 55 wherein said plurality of at least one element includes at least one universal fit ear mold.

58. (Original) The method of claim 55 wherein said plurality of at least one element includes a plurality of speakers.

59. (Original) The method of claim 58 wherein said plurality of speakers includes at least two speakers having different performance characteristics.

60. (Original) The method of claim 45 wherein said connector of sufficient length includes at least one wire cable and at least one fastener operable to facilitate a detachable physical coupling.